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April 1, 2009

TURKEY, PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN
JOINT STATEMENT
ADOPTED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE
THIRD TRILATERAL SUMMIT HELD IN ANKARA

Within the framework of the trilateral Ankara Process, initiated on 30 April 2007, and with a view to continuing and enhancing the trilateral cooperation and solidarity among the three brotherly countries, His Excellency Hamid Karzai, the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and His Excellency Asif Ali Zardari, the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, visited Ankara on 01 April 2009 on the invitation of His Excellency Abdullah Gül, the President of the Republic of Turkey.

The three Presidents, together with His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, held cordial and fruitful talks. They, with reference to the Ankara Declaration of 30 April 2007, the Joint Press Release of the Joint Working Group of 6 July 2007, the Joint Declaration of 30 October 2008, and the Joint Statement of 5 December 2008, manifested the need for closer coordination and consultation among the three brotherly countries, at a time when significant developments have been taking place and initiatives are being launched that can have an impact on the efforts to promote security, stability, peace, and economic development in the region.

During the discussions, the three Presidents, who were also accompanied by the Chiefs of General Staff and Army Staff as well as highest intelligence officials of their countries, covered trilateral, regional and international issues of common interest, particularly from a security and stability perspective, including with a view to addressing terrorism. The three Ministers of Foreign Affairs also held a separate meeting.

Mindful of the importance of coordination and cooperation in security matters between political, military and intelligence authorities at the regional level, the three countries have decided to continue trilateral contacts between their

above mentioned authorities at different levels in functional and plenary formats as a structured process.

In this vein, apart from the annual Trilateral Summit meetings, the three Ministers of Foreign Affairs will meet once a year with the participation of the military and intelligence officials of the three countries, the Joint Working Group will meet twice a year to follow-up the implementation of Summit level decisions and will also prepare the Summit and Ministerial meetings.

The three Presidents decided to expand and strengthen the trilateral cooperation among Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey, committing all their relevant institutions.

Presidents of Afghanistan and Pakistan, requested the Turkish President to organize in Turkey a regional summit that would underline their political will to enhance cooperation on regional issues.

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TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

Turkey and the U.S. are close friends, partners and allies for many decades. Based on shared values and perspectives, the Turkish-American relationship has attained a "strategic partnership" level in the aftermath of the Cold War. In addressing critical issues like terrorism, energy security, expanding democracy and free market economy, scope of this critical cooperation span across the Atlantic, Eurasia and beyond.

COUNTRIES/REGIONS:

Iraq

Turkey's interests in Iraq are in tune with those of the U.S. based on a shared vision and effort for the future of Iraq, maintaining its territorial integrity, while ensuring stability and supporting democracy in this country.

Afghanistan

With an aim to defeating extremism and terrorism, and ensuring Afghanistan stand on its own, Turkey from the outset has undertaken a significant role as part of the international effort towards Afghanistan. Providing integrated development aid concurrent with considerable security assistance are components of this posture. Turkey is determined to continue on this track with the U.S. and the international community.

Pakistan

Turkey views Pakistan critical to stability and security in Afghanistan and South Asia. Turkey's efforts are, therefore, geared towards helping to restrain extremism taking hold in this country, and assisting to develop an improved climate for dialogue and cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan, individually through the "Ankara Process", and together with the U.S. through the "Friends of Pakistan Initiative".

Iran

Turkey opposes acquisition of nuclear capability/weapons by Iran. In helping the efforts to resolve the problem through diplomacy, Turkey has undertaken certain individual initiatives and is prepared to play a constructive role as a

non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. Turkey's neighboring posture to Iran contributes to this picture.

Middle East

Turkey's history, predominantly Muslim population, democratic and secular system, and close ties with her neighbors provide positive tools in the Middle East. This, in turn, places Turkey on a platform for offering mediation, political cooperation schemes and joint infrastructure projects. Turkey's recent contribution in the Israeli-Syrian talks, its efforts in Lebanon and contributions through the OIC are worth mentioning in this regard.

The Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia

Turkey supports a Euro-Atlantic perspective for the Balkan, Caucasian and Central Asian countries that would be helpful to consolidate peace and stability in these neighboring regions. Turkey's pursuit as facilitator in resolving regional problems are in tune with this policy.

Africa

In tandem with the U.S. posture, Turkey's growing role in Africa is geared towards helping to sustain peace, stability and economic development in the continent. Turkey is a member of the African Development Bank, a "Strategic Partner" of the African Union, and the "Turkey-African Union Summit" was recently held in Istanbul, Turkey.

ISSUES:

NATO

Turkey views NATO as a corner stone for maintaining the transatlantic relations and for strengthening international security. Turkey supports the development of NATO-EU relations on the basis of a mutually agreed framework for cooperation.

Terrorism

Turkey is a steadfast ally in the war against international terrorism. She fights against terrorism within and just outside her borders. The action to prevent the PKK terrorist attacks originating from the north of Iraq are part of this endeavor. Maintaining close military and intelligence cooperation with the US on this issue is a critical priority for Turkey.

European Union

Turkey's EU membership is a strategic objective of the Turkish Foreign Policy. The accession process also provides valuable assets to its standing as a robust member of the transatlantic community. Sustained U.S. support in this regard is valuable, and is greatly appreciated.

Cyprus

Turkey supports a comprehensive and lasting settlement to the Cyprus problem on the basis of the established UN parameters of bi-zonality, political equality, equal status of the two Constituent States and a solution which will bring about a new partnership state. Turkey expects the U.S. and the international community to encourage the Greek Cypriot side to reach a just agreement. Turkey also expects the international community to take actions to lift the isolations imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people as promised.

Non-proliferation

Turkey is party to all international non-proliferation instruments and export control regimes, and she works towards their expansion and effective implementation.

Energy security

Turkey will be a staunch partner in completing the remaining projects of the East-West Energy Corridor through the trans-Caspian route, as well as the Iraqi energy development.

Turkey's UNSC Membership

Turkey is looking forward to work in close cooperation with the U.S. during her non-permanent membership to the UN Security Council for the term 2009-2011.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 6, 2009

**REMARKS BY PRESIDENT OBAMA
TO THE TURKISH PARLIAMENT**

Turkish Grand National Assembly Complex
Ankara, Turkey

3:30 P.M. (Local)

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Mr. Speaker, Madam Deputy Speaker, distinguished members, I am honored to speak in this chamber, and I am committed to renewing the alliance between our nations and the friendship between our people.

This is my first trip overseas as President of the United States. I've been to the G20 summit in London, and the NATO summit in Strasbourg, and the European Union summit in Prague. Some people have asked me if I chose to continue my travels to Ankara and Istanbul to send a message to the world. And my answer is simple: Evet -- yes. (Applause.) Turkey is a critical ally. Turkey is an important part of Europe. And Turkey and the United States must stand together -- and work together -- to overcome the challenges of our time.

This morning I had the great privilege of visiting the tomb of your extraordinary founder of your republic. And I was deeply impressed by this beautiful memorial to a man who did so much to shape the course of history. But it is also clear that the greatest monument to Ataturk's life is not something that can be cast in stone and marble. His greatest legacy is Turkey's strong, vibrant, secular democracy, and that is the work that this assembly carries on today. (Applause.)

This future was not easily assured, it was not guaranteed. At the end of World War I, Turkey could have succumbed to the foreign powers that were trying to claim its territory, or sought to restore an ancient empire. But Turkey chose a different future. You freed yourself from foreign control, and you founded a republic that commands the respect of the United States and the wider world.

And there is a simple truth to this story: Turkey's democracy is your own achievement. It was not forced upon you by any outside power, nor did it come without struggle and sacrifice. Turkey draws strength from both the successes of the past, and from the efforts of each generation of Turks that makes new progress for your people.

Now, my country's democracy has its own story. The general who led America in revolution and governed as our first President was, as many of you know, George Washington. And like you, we built a grand monument to honor our founding father -- a towering obelisk that stands in the heart of the capital city that bears Washington's name. I can see the Washington Monument from the window of the White House every day.

It took decades to build. There were frequent delays. Over time, more and more people contributed to help make this monument the inspiring structure that still stands tall today. Among those who came to our aid were friends from all across the world who offered their own tributes to Washington and the country he helped to found.

And one of those tributes came from Istanbul. Ottoman Sultan Abdulmejid sent a marble plaque that helped to build the Washington Monument. Inscribed in the plaque was a poem that began with a few simple words: "So as to strengthen the friendship between the two countries." Over 150 years have passed since those words were carved into marble. Our nations have changed in many ways. But our friendship is strong, and our alliance endures.

It is a friendship that flourished in the years after World War II, when President Truman committed our nation to the defense of Turkey's freedom and sovereignty, and Turkey committed itself into the NATO Alliance. Turkish troops have served by our side from Korea to Kosovo to Kabul. Together, we withstood the great test of the Cold War. Trade between our nations has steadily advanced. So has cooperation in science and research.

The ties among our people have deepened, as well, and more and more Americans of Turkish origin live and work and succeed within our borders. And as a basketball fan, I've even noticed that Hedo Turkoglu and Mehmet Okur have got some pretty good basketball games. (Applause.)

The United States and Turkey have not always agreed on every issue, and that's to be expected -- no two nations do. But we have stood together through many challenges over the last 60 years. And because of the strength of our alliance and the endurance of our friendship, both America and Turkey are stronger and the world is more secure.

Now, our two democracies are confronted by an unprecedented set of challenges: An economic crisis that recognizes no borders; extremism that leads to the killing of innocent men and women and children; strains on our energy supply and a changing climate; the proliferation of the world's deadliest weapons; and the persistence of tragic conflict.

These are the great tests of our young century. And the choices that we make in the coming years will determine whether the future will be shaped by fear or by freedom; by poverty or by prosperity; by strife or by a just, secure and lasting peace.

This much is certain: No one nation can confront these challenges alone, and all nations have a stake in overcoming them. That is why we must listen to one another, and seek common ground. That is why we must build on our mutual interests, and rise above our differences. We are stronger when we act together. That is the message that I've carried with me throughout this trip to Europe. That is the message that I delivered when I had the privilege of meeting with your

President and with your Prime Minister. That will be the approach of the United States of America going forward.

Already, America and Turkey are working with the G20 on an unprecedented response to an unprecedented economic crisis. Now, this past week, we came together to ensure that the world's largest economies take strong and coordinated action to stimulate growth and restore the flow of credit; to reject the pressures of protectionism, and to extend a hand to developing countries and the people hit hardest by this downturn; and to dramatically reform our regulatory system so that the world never faces a crisis like this again.

As we go forward, the United States and Turkey can pursue many opportunities to serve prosperity for our people. The President and I this morning talked about expanding the ties of commerce and trade. There's enormous opportunity when it comes to energy to create jobs. And we can increase new sources to not only free ourselves from dependence of other energies -- other countries' energy sources, but also to combat climate change. We should build on our Clean Technology Fund to leverage efficiency and renewable energy investments in Turkey. And to power markets in Turkey and Europe, the United States will continue to support your central role as an East-West corridor for oil and natural gas.

This economic cooperation only reinforces the common security that Europe and the United States share with Turkey as a NATO ally, and the common values that we share as democracies. So in meeting the challenges of the 21st century, we must seek the strength of a Europe that is truly united, peaceful and free.

So let me be clear: The United States strongly supports Turkey's bid to become a member of the European Union. (Applause.) We speak not as members of the EU, but as close friends of both Turkey and Europe. Turkey has been a resolute ally and a responsible partner in transatlantic and European institutions. Turkey is bound to Europe by more than the bridges over the Bosphorus. Centuries of shared history, culture, and commerce bring you together. Europe gains by the diversity of ethnicity, tradition and faith -- it is not diminished by it. And Turkish membership would broaden and strengthen Europe's foundation once more.

Now, of course, Turkey has its own responsibilities. And you've made important progress towards membership. But I also know that Turkey has pursued difficult political reforms not simply because it's good for EU membership, but because it's right for Turkey.

In the last several years, you've abolished state security courts, you've expanded the right to counsel. You've reformed the penal code and strengthened laws that govern the freedom of the press and assembly. You've lifted bans on teaching and broadcasting Kurdish, and the world noted with respect the important signal sent through a new state Kurdish television station.

These achievements have created new laws that must be implemented, and a momentum that should be sustained. For democracies cannot be static -- they must move forward. Freedom of religion and expression lead to a strong and vibrant civil society that only strengthens the state, which is why steps like reopening Halki Seminary will send such an important signal inside Turkey and beyond. An enduring commitment to the rule of law is the only way to achieve the security

that comes from justice for all people. Robust minority rights let societies benefit from the full measure of contributions from all citizens.

I say this as the President of a country that not very long ago made it hard for somebody who looks like me to vote, much less be President of the United States. But it is precisely that capacity to change that enriches our countries. Every challenge that we face is more easily met if we tend to our own democratic foundation. This work is never over. That's why, in the United States, we recently ordered the prison at Guantanamo Bay closed. That's why we prohibited -- without exception or equivocation -- the use of torture. All of us have to change. And sometimes change is hard.

Another issue that confronts all democracies as they move to the future is how we deal with the past. The United States is still working through some of our own darker periods in our history. Facing the Washington Monument that I spoke of is a memorial of Abraham Lincoln, the man who freed those who were enslaved even after Washington led our Revolution. Our country still struggles with the legacies of slavery and segregation, the past treatment of Native Americans.

Human endeavor is by its nature imperfect. History is often tragic, but unresolved, it can be a heavy weight. Each country must work through its past. And reckoning with the past can help us seize a better future. I know there's strong views in this chamber about the terrible events of 1915. And while there's been a good deal of commentary about my views, it's really about how the Turkish and Armenian people deal with the past. And the best way forward for the Turkish and Armenian people is a process that works through the past in a way that is honest, open and constructive.

We've already seen historic and courageous steps taken by Turkish and Armenian leaders. These contacts hold out the promise of a new day. An open border would return the Turkish and Armenian people to a peaceful and prosperous coexistence that would serve both of your nations. So I want you to know that the United States strongly supports the full normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia. It is a cause worth working towards.

It speaks to Turkey's leadership that you are poised to be the only country in the region to have normal and peaceful relations with all the South Caucasus nations. And to advance that peace, you can play a constructive role in helping to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which has continued for far too long.

Advancing peace also includes the disputes that persist in the Eastern Mediterranean. And here there's a cause for hope. The two Cypriot leaders have an opportunity through their commitment to negotiations under the United Nations Good Offices Mission. The United States is willing to offer all the help sought by the parties as they work towards a just and lasting settlement that reunifies Cyprus into a bizonal and bicommunal federation.

These efforts speak to one part of the critical region that surrounds Turkey. And when we consider the challenges before us, on issue after issue, we share common goals.

In the Middle East, we share the goal of a lasting peace between Israel and its neighbors. Let me be clear: The United States strongly supports the goal of two states, Israel and Palestine, living

side by side in peace and security. That is a goal shared by Palestinians, Israelis, and people of goodwill around the world. That is a goal that the parties agreed to in the road map and at Annapolis. That is a goal that I will actively pursue as President of the United States.

We know the road ahead will be difficult. Both Israelis and Palestinians must take steps that are necessary to build confidence and trust. Both Israelis and Palestinians, both must live up to the commitments they have made. Both must overcome longstanding passions and the politics of the moment to make progress towards a secure and lasting peace.

The United States and Turkey can help the Palestinians and Israelis make this journey. Like the United States, Turkey has been a friend and partner in Israel's quest for security. And like the United States, you seek a future of opportunity and statehood for the Palestinians. So now, working together, we must not give into pessimism and mistrust. We must pursue every opportunity for progress, as you've done by supporting negotiations between Syria and Israel. We must extend a hand to those Palestinians who are in need, while helping them strengthen their own institutions. We must reject the use of terror, and recognize that Israel's security concerns are legitimate.

The peace of the region will also be advanced if Iran forgoes any nuclear weapons ambitions. Now, as I made clear in Prague yesterday, no one is served by the spread of nuclear weapons, least of all Turkey. You live in a difficult region and a nuclear arm race would not serve the security of this nation well. This part of the world has known enough violence. It has known enough hatred. It does not need a race for an ever-more powerful tool of destruction.

Now, I have made it clear to the people and leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran that the United States seeks engagement based on mutual interest and mutual respect. We want Iran to play its rightful role in the community of nations. Iran is a great civilization. We want them to engage in the economic and political integration that brings prosperity and security. But Iran's leaders must choose whether they will try to build a weapon or build a better future for their people.

So both Turkey and the United States support a secure and united Iraq that does not serve as a safe haven for terrorists. I know there were differences about whether to go to war. There were differences within my own country, as well. But now we must come together as we end this war responsibly, because the future of Iraq is inseparable from the future of the broader region. As I've already announced, and many of you are aware, the United States will remove our combat brigades by the end of next August, while working with the Iraqi government as they take responsibility for security. And we will work with Iraq, Turkey, and all Iraq's neighbors, to forge a new dialogue that reconciles differences and advances our common security.

Make no mistake, though: Iraq, Turkey, and the United States face a common threat from terrorism. That includes the al Qaeda terrorists who have sought to drive Iraqis apart and destroy their country. That includes the PKK. There is no excuse for terror against any nation. (Applause.) As President, and as a NATO ally, I pledge that you will have our support against the terrorist activities of the PKK or anyone else. These efforts will be strengthened by the continued work to build ties of cooperation between Turkey, the Iraqi government, and Iraq's Kurdish leaders, and by your continued efforts to promote education and opportunity and democracy for the Kurdish population here inside Turkey.

Finally, we share the common goal of denying al Qaeda a safe haven in Pakistan or Afghanistan. The world has come too far to let this region backslide, and to let al Qaeda terrorists plot further attacks. That's why we are committed to a more focused effort to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda. That is why we are increasing our efforts to train Afghans to sustain their own security, and to reconcile former adversaries. That's why we are increasing our support for the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan, so that we stand on the side not only of security, but also of opportunity and the promise of a better life.

Turkey has been a true partner. Your troops were among the first in the International Security Assistance Force. You have sacrificed much in this endeavor. Now we must achieve our goals together. I appreciate that you've offered to help us train and support Afghan security forces, and expand opportunity across the region. Together, we can rise to meet this challenge like we have so many before.

I know there have been difficulties these last few years. I know that the trust that binds the United States and Turkey has been strained, and I know that strain is shared in many places where the Muslim faith is practiced. So let me say this as clearly as I can: The United States is not, and will never be, at war with Islam. (Applause.) In fact, our partnership with the Muslim world is critical not just in rolling back the violent ideologies that people of all faiths reject, but also to strengthen opportunity for all its people.

I also want to be clear that America's relationship with the Muslim community, the Muslim world, cannot, and will not, just be based upon opposition to terrorism. We seek broader engagement based on mutual interest and mutual respect. We will listen carefully, we will bridge misunderstandings, and we will seek common ground. We will be respectful, even when we do not agree. We will convey our deep appreciation for the Islamic faith, which has done so much over the centuries to shape the world -- including in my own country. The United States has been enriched by Muslim Americans. Many other Americans have Muslims in their families or have lived in a Muslim-majority country -- I know, because I am one of them. (Applause.)

Above all, above all we will demonstrate through actions our commitment to a better future. I want to help more children get the education that they need to succeed. We want to promote health care in places where people are vulnerable. We want to expand the trade and investment that can bring prosperity for all people. In the months ahead, I will present specific programs to advance these goals. Our focus will be on what we can do, in partnership with people across the Muslim world, to advance our common hopes and our common dreams. And when people look back on this time, let it be said of America that we extended the hand of friendship to all people.

There's an old Turkish proverb: "You cannot put out fire with flames." America knows this. Turkey knows this. There's some who must be met by force, they will not compromise. But force alone cannot solve our problems, and it is no alternative to extremism. The future must belong to those who create, not those who destroy. That is the future we must work for, and we must work for it together.

I know there are those who like to debate Turkey's future. They see your country at the crossroads of continents, and touched by the currents of history. They know that this has been a place where

civilizations meet, and different peoples come together. They wonder whether you will be pulled in one direction or another.

But I believe here is what they don't understand: Turkey's greatness lies in your ability to be at the center of things. This is not where East and West divide -- this is where they come together. (Applause.) In the beauty of your culture. In the richness of your history. In the strength of your democracy. In your hopes for tomorrow.

I am honored to stand here with you -- to look forward to the future that we must reach for together -- and to reaffirm America's commitment to our strong and enduring friendship. Thank you very much. (Applause.) Thank you. Thank you.

END
3:55 P.M. (Local)

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How do you classify Turkey as a critical U.S. friend, partner and ally for many decades?

The Turkish-American partnership is strategic in nature, strong, multi-dimensional, institutional and time tested. These qualities classify the relationship as a very special one at all times.

Why is President Obama's visit to Turkey historically important?

It was the first visit by a US President within the first 100 days of his presidency. It was the first overseas bilateral visit by President Obama. It was a visit by a bridge builder to a country which stands as a bridge and a gateway between the East and the West; the North and the South. And, last but not least, it was a major step symbolizing the intention of the Administration to deepen and enhance the cooperation between the United States and Turkey with a 21st century perspective, and for the years to come.

What is Turkey's role, as a G-20 country, in tackling with the global economic downturn?

Turkey is the 17th largest economy in the world and a G-20 member. During the Second G-20 Summit in London, Turkey became a member of the newly established Financial Stability Board (FSB) to work with IMF to bring effective financial regulation to the markets.

Her financial sector aligned with international standards and best practices, Turkey's transparent and well capitalized banking system and stable political environment have supported the economy to out-perform the recent global market volatility.

Turkey's GDP was USD 740 billion in 2008 and the per capita GDP has almost tripled in the last six years, reaching USD 10,368 in 2008. In purchasing power parity terms, GDP amounts to USD 900 billion. Growth is continued incessantly over the 27 quarters until the last quarter of 2008, averaging 5.3 % annually between 2002-2009.

Why is Turkey important for the U.S. policy in Iraq? (Role of Turkish companies/reconstruction in Iraq)

Turkey's policy objectives in Iraq coincide with those of the U.S. Turkey provides a significant amount of logistical support to the U.S. forces in Iraq. Turkey has maintained her Embassy in Baghdad almost incessantly, and opened a Consulate in Mosul, planning to open another Consulate in Basra soon.

Turkish contractors undertake significant projects for rehabilitation of the country. Various parts of the US bases in Iraq and their infrastructure were constructed by the

Turkish firms. In 2008, a Turkish construction firm, started to build the American University of Iraq in Suleymaniyah.

Iraq's oil and gas resources can also be exported via Turkey.

What role does Turkey play in the Middle East/Lebanon/Syria/Israel/Iran?

Why is it critical/central to US policies?

Turkey is a factor for stability in the Middle East. Owing to affiliations of historical dimension, Turkey plays a multi-faceted, critical and agile role in endeavors to establish peace and harmony in the region.

As and when required, Turkey offers facilitation of direct and indirect talks between parties, as in the case of Syria-Israel talks.

Turkey is the first Muslim country that recognized Isreal in 1949, a relationship which attained strategic value over the course of years in the region and beyond.

On Palestinian question, Turkey supports a two-state-solution based on the UN resolutions, and the Arab Peace Initiative. This encourages a comprehensive peace process where all tracks are taken on board concurrently.

Turkey has contributed to resolution of the recent political crisis in Lebanon while carrying out reconstruction projects in this country.

Turkey supports the U.S. administration's policies towards Syria and Iran.

Why is Turkey critical for the success of the US policy in Pakistan and Afghanistan? What are her contributions?

Turkey and U.S. have similar goals and strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Owing to her close ties and cultural affinity with both countries, and being a modern, secular, parliamentary democracy, Turkey would be critically important in ensuring the collective endeavor of the international community in these countries.

Turkey committed USD 200 million for Afghanistan and USD 100 million for Pakistan. Turkey has maintained the command of ISAF twice to-date, and is about to take over the command of central command in Afghanistan. There is a Turkish PRT in Afghanistan, and the Turkish forces currently total 1,000. Turkey's non-military contributions are focused in health, vocational training, agriculture and education, where quick improvement of daily life conditions of local people is most likely.

What are Turkey's initiatives to normalize relations with Armenia? What is the relevance to Azerbaijan?

Turkey and Armenia, with a view to normalizing their relations and address the outstanding questions, have engaged in a dialogue process since last year. The talks

are so far confidential and have produced a joint statement on April 23, 2009, together with Switzerland, which plays a facilitator role in the process.

The Southern Caucasus is strife with conflict and deep controversies. Turkey has adopted a longer view, and therefore wishes Azerbaijan, and the Nagorno Karabagh problem, be part of the solution.

What is Turkey's role in contributing to the peace and stability in the Caucasus?

Security and stability in this region is indispensable for the sustaining stability of the Euro-Atlantic area. Turkey views a need for a comprehensive initiative for ensuring overall stability of the region. To build shared confidence, Turkey has proposed the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform-CSCP which is inclusive of interested parties, and adheres to basic norms and principles of the U.N. and OSCE.

The Platform strives to find the least common denominator among the member countries (Turkey, Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan) with a view to prepare the background for multilateral regional cooperation.

Why is Turkey critical for global/regional energy security?

Turkey forms a natural energy bridge between the resource-rich countries of the Caspian basin, Middle East and the world markets. Turkey is rapidly evolving into a key energy transit country, becoming a major artery for supplying hydrocarbons to Europe.

The Turkish and U.S. interests are in tandem, and the two countries work together towards energy security.

Why is Turkey a critical NATO ally?

Turkey has been a pivotal NATO ally for almost 60 years. Turkey views NATO as the corner stone of her transatlantic relations and the essential forum for security consultations between Europe and North America.

Turkey also supports the development of NATO-EU relations on the basis of the mutually agreed framework for cooperation.

What kind of a role does Turkey play in the UN Security Council?

Turkey currently is the chair of the North Korea Sanctions Committee and the Democratic Republic of Congo Sanctions Committee until the end of 2009. In 2010 Turkey will take up the responsibility of coordinator for Afghanistan and will head the Terrorism Committee.

What role does Turkey play in the international anti-piracy efforts off the coast of Somalia?

Turkey participates in the international efforts to fight against piracy off the Somalian coast. Turkey is an active member of the Contact Group since its inception in January 2009, and a Turkish frigate serves within the international Combined Joint Task Force-151.

The Turkish Navy assumed the command of this Task Force on May 1, until August 15.

What role does Turkey play in the efforts against international terrorism?

Turkey is committed to law enforcement in a critical region where drug smuggling and radical Al Qaeda type terrorists' significant transit routes overlap.

What is Turkey's European vocation?

Turkey is currently in an integration process with Europe that complements its European and Euro-Atlantic posture.

Turkey's eventual EU membership is part of this process, a strategic objective of the Turkish foreign policy.

What positive role does Turkey play in resolving the Cyprus problem?

Turkey has demonstrated her support to resolution of the Cyprus problem in 2004 throughout the negotiations for the U.N. brokered peace plan (The Annan Plan to reunify both parts of the island). The plan was overwhelmingly accepted by the Turkish Cypriots, and rejected by the Greek side.

Turkey continues to support a comprehensive and lasting settlement to the Cyprus problem on the basis of the established UN parameters of bi-zonality, political equality, equal status of the two Constituent States and a solution which will bring about a new partnership state.

What important reforms has Turkey accomplished in recent years?

A new Civil Code and Penal Code further enlarging the scope of freedoms and liberties, as well as improving the status of women and children were enacted in 2002 and 2005.

The official Turkish Radio and Television started broadcasting in Kurdish 24/7 in January 2009.

Article 301 of the Penal Code (related with freedom of expression) was amended in May 2008.

The new Law on Charities and non-profit Foundations became law in February 2008.

What role does Turkey play in the troublesome Balkans?

Turkey has a role in Bosnia (*as member of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council*), and she contributes to the Kosovo International Steering Group (ISG). Turkish civilian and uniformed personnel serves in KFOR and EULEX in Kosovo, and EUFOR in Bosnia.

What is Turkey's role in non-proliferation?

Turkey is a party to all international non-proliferation instruments and export control regimes and wishes to see their universal and effective implementation.

What is Turkey's role in international peace and security?

Turkey has long contributed to international forces that serve in areas of conflict. This includes providing troops, police and specialists to international peacekeeping missions (*e.g. KFOR, UNMIK and the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean, the Military Training Mission for Iraq, the EU led police missions in Macedonia (Proxima), Kinshasa (EUPOL) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUPM)*, the EUFOR-ALTHEA operation that replaced SFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

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DISSEMINATION

FOR TURKEY FILE

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